rodent proof wire braiding and ozone resistant layer. OMCs have also tied up with some stove manufacturers for production of "Green Label" stoves, which have higher thermal efficiency and, apart from being economical to the consumers, also help in conseving fuel and protecting the environment. However, a customer is not under any compulsion to purchase the same from the LPG distributors. In fact, customers are at liberty to buy these appliances (meeting BIS specifications) from any source of the choice.

Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) has also reported that in order to enhance customer service and add value to their customers, it has launched an initiative, named "Beyond LPG". Under this initiative, BPCL has entered into arrangements with leading brands for sale of kitchen/household items through their distributors at special prices. There are clear instructions that no customer will be forced to buy any these items.

Poor services by LPG distributors in Balia, U.P.

263. SHRI KAMAL AKHTAR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the people in village Narahi in District Balia, Uttar Pradesh are facing problem due to improper supply of gas cylinders;

(b) if so, whether Government would appoint LPG dealer in that area as there is no dealer within the radius of 20 km. except one of Bharat Petroleum;

(c) whether Government have received representations from some Members of Parliament also during December, 2006 to January, 2007, in this regard;

(d) whether Government have replied to the MPs and if so, the details thereof;

(e) the action Government propose to take to appoint dealer in that area in view of huge public demand; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (f) At present, there is no overall shortage of LPG in the country including in Narahi, District Balia, Uttar Pradesh and LPG supplies to distributors are being made by the Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) through indigenous production and imports in accordance with the genuine demand of customers registered with the LPG distributors.

OMCs have reported that Narahi is a rural location and LPG requirement of the area (about 700-800 refills per months) is catered to by one LPG distributorship of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited which was commissioned in 2002 at a distance of 6 kms. A feasibility study carried out by OMCs in 2006 revealed that the population of Narahi is 10,700 and the location is not feasible for setting up of an independent distributorship.

Representations have been received from Shri Vijay Krishna, MP (Lok Sabha) and Shri Kamal Akhtar, MP (Rajya Sabha). Replies have been sent to Shri Vijay Krishna and Shri Kamal Akhtar, Hon'ble MPs on 21.3.2007 and 28.06.2007 respectively.

Difficulties faced by tourists in Delhi

264. SHRI JAI PARKASH AGGARWAL: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether middle class tourists are facing difficulties to get economy class residences at places/cities of tourists importance, particularly in Delhi; and

(b) if so, the steps proposed to be taken to provide low budget hotels to the tourists?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) There is shortage of budget hotel accommodation in the whole country and in particular in Delhi. However, Ministry of Tourism has asked all the State Governments and other land owning agencies including Indian Railways to allocate land for building hotels especially in the budget category. They have also been advised to follow investor friendly land policies, adopt single window approach for promoting hotel projects, allot sites on revenue sharing basis, grant extra FAR/ FSI for hotels, permit extra commercial usage in the hotels etc. so that Budget Hotels are promoted. Further, in order to increase the number of rooms in the budget category, Ministry of Tourism has floated schemes for the approval of Guest Houses and Incredible India Bed and Breakfast Establishments.

Travel awards

265. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:
SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has been declared the travellers' favourite country because of its rich culture, variety of attractions and value for money and topped the list as per 2007 Conde Nast Traveller Readers' Travel Awards and India scored above 89 points in all the ten criteria with its best features being culture;

(b) if so, whether Government have felt a need of having coordination with the States that will assist to draw a comprehensive, State-wise, region-wise and national plans and unlock India's optimum tourism potential; and

(c) what concrete steps Government propose to take to further improve the tourism potential?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) In the formulation of policy and programmes for development of tourism at national and regional levels in the country, inputs from States/UTs are appropriately used. The Government also supports the initiatives of the State/UT Governments by providing Central Financial Assistance for development of infrastructure and facilities at tourist centres, in preparation of perspective plans for short-term and long-term development of tourism in States/UTs, etc.

(c) The steps being taken by the Government to further improve the tourism potential include:

- Development of tourism infrastructure at tourist sites with the cooperation of other Ministries/Departments and State/UT Governments;
- Focusing on growth of hotel infrastructure particularly budget hotels;
- Enhancing connectivity through augmentation of air capacity and improving road infrastructure to major tourist attractions;
- Direct approach to the consumers through Electronic and Print media through the "Incredible India" campaign;
- Creation of World Class Collaterals;
- Direct co-operative marketing with the airlines, tour operators and wholesalers overseas;
- According greater focus in the emerging markets particularly in the region of China, North East Asia and South East Asia;